

ASIAN TRAFFIC

Conference

SYDNEY JUNE 25 – JUNE 26 2004

The College of Fine Arts, Sydney Australia

Convened by the Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics,

College of Fine Arts, UNSW. In association with the Asia-Australia Art Centre

The Asian Traffic Conference brings together artists, art historians, curators, cultural theorists and critics to explore the *movement* of Asian art and artists throughout the world.

Its principal aim is to advance critical analysis of the effects of 'Asian diaspora', and of the phenomenon of 'global itinerancy' in relation to art production and exhibition practice.

Much of the contemporary theoretical writing on diasporic identity has evolved from studies in pan-African culture, or else from research on European-based immigrant communities from the sub-continent. It remains very much an open question whether the insights of scholars such as Gilroy, Young, Spivak and Bhabha have useful application beyond the field from which they were developed. The various Asian diasporas remain relatively under-theorised and under-represented in cultural theory. At the same time it is equally clear that the issues of global diaspora, itinerancy and 'cosmopolitics' are central to the practice of so many contemporary artists with an Asian background.

Many questions arise from this. For example:

What is the relationship between 'home' culture and global culture for an artist in the international artworld?

What can be said of instances of resentment and conflict between 'those who leave' and 'those who stay'?

How can artists present sophisticated and nuanced regional perspectives to an international audience that may have only prejudiced or partial knowledge of the culture that informs the work?

How do time and distance transform the representation of an imagined 'home' culture?

Asian Traffic will include papers by academics, artists and curators who have an interest in the unique problems associated with the construction or presentation of cultural identities 'at a distance'. There will also be performances by artists from Thailand and China.

The conference coincides with a major exhibition project at the Asia-Australia Arts Centre.

Image: VASAN SETHIKEY, "TRUTH IS ELSEWHERE"
Puppets

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OVERSEAS KEYNOTES:

Hou Hanru

One of the world's foremost curators of contemporary Asian art, Hou Hanru was born in 1963, Guangzhou, China, and lives in Paris. He has worked since 1990 as an independent critic and curator, and advisor (professor) at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. His books include *Hou Hanru: On the Mid-Ground* (2003).

His exhibitions include: 2003: *Zone of Urgency*, Venice Biennale; 2001: *Asian Party, Global Game*, ARCO, Madrid; 2001/2000: *Paris Pour Escalpe*, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris; *My home is yours, Your home is mine*, Samsung Museum, Seoul; Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo; 2000: Shanghai Biennale; *Leaving The Island*, Pusan, Korea; 1999: The French Pavilion, Venice Biennale; 1999/98/97: *Cities on the Move, Secession*, Vienna; CAPC, Bordeaux, France; PS1, New York, Louisiana Museum, Denmark; The Hayward Gallery, London; Kiasma Museum, Helsinki.

Leng Lin

An Associate Professor of art theory and history at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, Leng Lin has curated a number of seminal exhibitions in and outside China, including *Its Me!* (1998), and *Weightlessness* (2001). He has also served as vice president to one of China's premier art auction houses which, under his organisation, undertook China's first two auctions of Chinese contemporary art. He is the author of *Its Me!* (2000) and *Chinese Contemporary Oil Paintings* (with Zhao Li, 1993).

Marian Pastor-Roces

An independent curator, critic, and cultural theorist, based in Manila, The Philippines, Marian Pastor Roces has published extensively on a wide range of debates on culture, politics, art and museology. In the Philippines, her work is focused on museum and exhibition development and cultural assets mapping. She is President of TAO Management Inc., the pioneering Philippine corporation, specializing in a developing curatorship in the interest of social justice.

Speakers Include:

Alice Ming Wai Jim, Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Canada
John Clark, Professor in Art History, University of Sydney.
Suzann Victor, artist (b. Singapore)
Olivia Khoo, Film Studies, University of New South Wales.
Leung Mee Ping, artist (b. Hong Kong)
Binghui Huangfu, Director, Asia-Australia Art Centre, Sydney
Chaitanya Sambrani, Art Theory, ANU, Canberra
David McNeill, Art Theory, UNSW

Panel Discussion:

On Not Speaking Chinese: a dialogue between cultural theorist Ien Ang and visual artists on the subject of diasporic experience and identity

With artists Lindy Lee, Owen Leong, Renee So, Aaron Seeto and Ien Ang, Professor and Director of the Institute for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney.

Performances:

Vasan Sitthikit, Thailand.
Jiang Jie, China.
Shimmeeshok performance group: Linda Lou Murphy and Yoko Kajio, Australia.

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